

Virginia STEM Education Advisory Board
Virtual Meeting, ZOOM
Meeting Minutes



March 7, 2023
Federal Earmark Proposal

3:00 pm – 4:00 pm

In Attendance:

Board Members Present via Teleconference: Edward Monroe, Chris Dovi, Amy Sabarre (Chair), Dr. Padmanabhan Seshaiyer, Zaina Tarafdar, Dr. Susheela Shanta, Amy White, Victoria Chua

Ex-officios and Staff: Emily Salmon (Senior Associate for Strategic Planning and Policy), Bryan Slater (Secretary of Labor Office), Michael Perez, Elizabeth Shultz, and Ada Sue Siler (Science Museum of Virginia Staff), Ramona Talor (Office of the Attorney General)

Guests: Julie Stozer, Sadie Norwick, Liam Orr, Maddy Busse, Abigail Gump (OAG)

Topics:

- Review of mission and goals
- Discuss federal appropriations proposal
- Vote for approval to submit proposal
- Motion to adjourn

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Ms. Sabarre called the meeting to order at 2:01pm. She welcomed everyone and noted a quorum was not yet present. When members present reach a quorum, voting will occur.

Ms. Sabarre called for a motion to open the meeting. The motion was made by Dr. Shanta and seconded by Ms. White. A vote was taken by show of hands, all in favor, motion carries.

Approval of Minutes (December 12, 2022)

Ms. Sabarre said that the minutes will be presented at the next in-person meeting for approval.

STEM Advisory Board Mission and Goals

Ms. Sabarre reviewed the mission statement for the Board.

“The Virginia STEM Education Advisory Board provides continuous recommendations, establishes and aligns integrative STEM education efforts, and expands resources for all Virginians”

Review of Proposal

Ms. Sabare reviewed the main components of the proposal to apply for Federal funding to support the Virginia State STEM Education Advisory Board and its mission. Proposals are due to the offices of Senator Kaine and Warner by Friday March 10, 2023. The selected proposals for the Federal appropriations will be made on June 30 2023.

The first year work plan is outlined in the proposal. CodeVA volunteered to serve as the fiscal officer.

The proposed budget is at \$1M. This amount incorporates 2 full time staff positions and one part time staff position.

Ms. Sabarre asked for comments or questions.

Ms. Salmon asked for clarification of the full application process. Ms Sabare explained that Senator Kaine and Warner will select two proposals for Virginia and then present them at the Federal level for consideration.

Ms. Salmon offered some wording changes to the first introductory paragraph of the proposal. Dr. Seshaiyer added that including statistics may give additional weight and meaning to the verbiage. Ms. White contributed that offering comparisons to similar work in other states may help. Mr. Dovi added that looking to other STEM action networks and models for purpose may help as a guide for wording.

Ms. Sabarre asked for suggestions on the second section. Then, Ms. Sabarre noted that a work group will be pulled together to fine tune and continue editing the proposal document.

Mr. Slater asked “where did these questions come from?” Referring to the prompts for the proposal. Ms. Sabarre responded that the prompts came from the open call for proposals from a mutual community partner.

Dr. Seshaiyer shared a link to comparable proposals from other entities to use as a guide.

Mr. Slayter noted that he feels kind of blindsided and confused as to where this proposal started.

Mr. Dovi responded that CodeVA was also approved to complete a submission for the proposal.

Ms. White added that she met with Julies from TIES. TIES started State STEM ecosystem sin other states. TIES offered a consultation pro bono and they advised that this opportunity is what appropriations are for, and the group should go for it. The chances of being awarded are unknown, but the group wont know if we don't ask.

Ms. Sabarre stated that she will not submit the application until the Board approves the proposal. This type of work has been talked about in the state for over ten years. The idea isn't new. The funding source of Federal appropriation is new.

Mr. Slater added that it is better to coordinate efforts like this in more advance. Need to collaborate and be on the same page with more advance notification. The proposed staffing positions need to be consulted with human resources professionals. The devil is in the details, and those details need to be finalized.

Ms. White asked about the proposed staff positions. Who would the staff report to? Will the funding renew after the first year?

Ms. Sabarre replied that the staff positions will report to the Board. It is unknown if the funding will renew or if it is sustainable. The staff positions would focus on raising additional funds the first year.

Dr. Shanta asked if the sustainability question is addressed in the proposal. This is necessary and essential to the proposal.

Ms. Sabarre stated that if the Board is awarded the money, then the Board is now a player in a field they were previously. The Board could potentially obtain State funding going forward.

Mr. Slater asked if an advisory board can accept Federal funding.

Ms. Taylor replied that according to Virginia code, an advisory board can apply for funding.

Mr. Slater stressed the importance of consulting further with the Office of the Attorney General more before proceeding. We must make sure that we are legally allowed to ask for money for these purposes.

Ms. Sabarre said some details of the proposal may change as more information or other sources and partners are obtained. She then called for any additional questions and shared comments from non-attending members.

Dr. Shanta called a motion to vote and approve the proposal for Federal funding. Ms. Tarafdar called the second. A vote was taken by verbal affirmation.

Victoria Chuah - Aye

Chris Dovi- Aye

Edward Monroe - Aye

Amy Sabarre - Aye

Dr. Padmanbhan Seshaiyer - Aye

Dr. Susheela Shanta - Aye

Zaina Tarafdar - Aye

Amy White - Aye
Emily Salmon - Aye

Motion carries.

Ms. Sabarre shared that next steps included creating a working group to tweak the wording of the proposal and reach out to the Office of the Attorney General for additional counsel. The proposal will be submitted by Friday.

Ms. White offered additional support from the Roanoke Tech Council. If Ms. Sabarre sends a form letter, Ms. White offers to have the Roanoke Tech Council sign and send in.

Dr. Shanta offers to assist with clearly defined tasks.

Mr. Slater said to coordinate with the Secretary of Education before proceeding.

Public Comment

Ms. Sabarre asked for any public comment. None heard.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Mr. Monroe to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dovi. A vote was taken by show of hands, all approved, none opposed. Motion carries.

Meeting adjourned at 2:52pm

Zoom Recording Available

Next Meeting is April 28, 2023.